

# Wildfire Task Force

Over the past 25 years, wildfires have caused more than \$10 billion (in today's dollars) in insured property losses in the United States, with the majority of losses occurring in the western United States. Losses from wildfires have been increasing as urban expansion continues to penetrate into the previously undeveloped forest, chaparral, and grasslands, areas at high risk of wildfire. Nearly 40 percent of new home development in the western United States is occurring in this "Wildland Urban Interface" (WUI), putting more insured property at risk every year. Wildfire losses arise under a variety of causes. Typically, these wildfires are considered natural disasters, or events caused by human intervention through individuals with no means of providing payment for the extensive damages caused by their intentional or careless conduct. However, the causes of some of these wildfires create opportunities for subrogation recovery, including fires involving electrical distribution lines, controlled burns, faulty equipment, or other scenarios where a potential defendant with large financial means may be responsible for causing the fire.

The Wildfire Task Force within Cozen O'Connor is made up of attorneys who are experienced knowledgeable in handling catastrophic wildfire losses. The members of the Wildfire Task Force are experienced in working with the appropriate experts and handling and managing the unique issues that arise with these large catastrophic losses. The attorneys have handled wildfire losses in California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Montana, Colorado, Texas, and Washington. Cozen O'Connor attorneys have recovered in excess of \$180 million for insurers from wildfires in the western United States. The task force members are familiar with the groundwork and legal work necessary to develop and pursue these complex and diverse subrogation claims. The Wildfire Task Force maintains a database of experts qualified in wildfire investigation, spread, and ignition sources, as well as experts in the field of utility distribution and transmission lines, metallurgy, and other engineering practices necessary to document and establish a wildfire claim.

A sampling of some of the wildfires attorneys from the task force have been involved with include:

## Arizona

- Wallow
- Monument
- Horseshoe Two

## California

- Malibu
- Grass Valley
- Witch
- Rice Canyon



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- Happy Camp
- Sayre
- Sesnon
- Jesusita

#### Colorado

- Overland Road 100
- Valentine
- Lower North Fork
- Crystal
- Hartsong
- Woodland Heights

#### Montana

- Bucksnot

#### Nevada

- Caughlin
- Washoe

#### New Mexico

- Las Conchas

#### Texas

- Possum Kingdom
- Hohertz
- 101 Ranch
- Bastrop
- Steiner Ranch
- Spice Wood

#### Utah

- New Harmony
- Wood Hollow

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